

2.1 Our Vision

“All people living in the Cook Islands living healthier lives and achieving their aspirations”

2.2 Our Mission

“To provide accessible, affordable health care and equitable health services of the highest quality, by and for all in order to improve the health status of people living in the Cook Islands”

2.3 Our Priorities

The focus of the strategy is to empower people to take ownership and responsibility for their health and the environment we live in to reduce NCDs and future health risks. This is supported by the following priorities:

- enhancing the infrastructure of the health system and supporting on-going health governance and organisational reforms;
- promoting partnerships for institutional capacity development;
- strengthening health sector policy, planning and regulations, improve data collection, monitoring and evaluation;
- promoting gender sensitive research and analysis;
- strengthening community capacity and capability on social determinants of health;
- improving information, communication and technology systems and strategies, to provide accessible and accurate health information.

2.4 Our Goals

1. A health service that supports and empowers individuals, family & communities to achieve their full health potential;
2. Protect the health of Cook Islanders through responsive quality health services;
3. Strengthen infrastructure and health systems to encourage healthier lifestyles and safer environments;

2.5 Our Objectives

1. The promotion of health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles is intensified;
2. To support families and communities to live healthier lives;
3. To reduce the overall impact of the burden of disease (Cardiovascular, Diabetes, Hypertension, Respiratory, Cancer, Injuries);
4. To improve access to quality, safe, accessible, affordable and appropriate healthcare services;
5. Strengthen healthcare systems and services through improved coordination, collaboration and partnerships with community groups, national, regional and global institutions;
6. To strengthen institutional arrangements, procedures, processes and financial resources to purchase and distribute medical products and technologies;
7. Promote a healthier environment and influence public policies in all sectors to address the socio-economic and environmental determinants of health;

2.6 Values

Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health values statement applies to its staff, contractors and partnerships, and provides the foundation for the development and delivery of health services now and into the future:

Respect	Acknowledging a person’s dignity, integrity and rights with compassion, trust, privacy and confidentiality;
People focused	Ensuring that the welfare of men and women, boys and girls remain our priority, guided by the human rights principles of empowerment, gender equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability;
Equity	Promoting human rights principles and providing timely and equitable access to quality, affordable healthcare services for all people in the Cook Islands;
Quality	Striving for best practice and excellence in all aspects of our work. Client focused, delivering safe, responsive, sensitive, sustainable, well resourced, evidence based healthcare services provided by qualified and competent workforce including carers and advocates;
Integrity	Maintaining professionalism, honesty, respect and confidentiality;
Accountability	Our systems are transparent and reflect responsible governance and management, ensure gender equality, non-discrimination and the participation of men and women in decision making at all levels.

2.7 Guiding Principles

The National Sustainable Development Plan 2011 – 2015 (NSDP) guiding principles which place people at the centre of Cook Islands development have been incorporated into the Cook Islands National Health Strategy. It gives priority attention to elements that are essential to providing the quality of life for people living in the Cook Islands, and reflect the key pillars needed to realise the national vision:

“To enjoy the highest quality of life consistent with the aspirations of our people and in harmony with our culture and environment.”¹

Leadership	leading the country to achieve its national vision requires strong and decisive leadership at all levels of society;
Partnership	the opportunities envisaged under our national vision require the promotion of our countries common good over vested interests and significant technical and financial resources, both of which are beyond the scope of our government alone;
Transparency and Accountability	are essential for the efficient functioning of our economy and for fostering social well being;

¹ The Cook Islands National Sustainable Plan 2011-2015

Social Cohesion	will engender a sense of belonging and pride in our people and generate the trust required to take us through both the good and challenging times as we journey towards a sustainable future;
Equity	will facilitate and ensure equality of opportunity and equal rights for all our people including access to public goods and services such as education and health care; promote the human rights of our people, including the most vulnerable and marginalised groups. It will identify and address gender and other biases in our society;
Sustainability	a sustainable future for our nation requires us to effectively integrate economic, social and environmental issues in order to make the wisest use of our capital stocks to meet the needs of current and future generations;

2.8 Te Marae Ora's Responsibilities

Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health has the responsibility to:

- a) develop, maintain, administer, operate and manage health facilities, and all related services and operations;
- b) regulate health facilities which the Ministry does not manage or operate;
- c) promote and ensure the proper and effective education, training and regulation of the health professions and allied health professions, and to provide oversight and assistance to professional bodies lawfully exercising such roles and functions;
- d) establish, regulate, implement and enforce standards concerning the training, qualifications and performance required for health professionals, allied health professionals and other health service providers in accordance with the provisions of Health Acts and any applicable laws;
- e) monitor the performance of health service providers, and to take action to enforce standards of health care, and professional and ethical conduct in the provision of health services;
- f) establish and implement systems of quality control and complaints related to the provision of health services;
- g) ensure that the rights of patients and persons using the services of health service providers in the Cook Islands are protected, and to take all such action as is necessary to protect elderly, infirm and vulnerable people under the permanent or temporary care of the Ministry;
- h) develop health management systems and to promote capacity building in relation to health planning, health resourcing, health information and health research;
- i) arrange for and provide any health service by or through any health service provider (whether in Cook Islands or overseas), if the Ministry determines that such provider can provide the health service most effectively and efficiently;
- j) cooperate with, assist and support government agencies, non-government agencies and Island Governments in relation to the provision of health services and the implementation of health related programs and activities;
- k) implement laws, requirements, programs and initiatives related to public health issues affecting the health of the community and the environment (including vector control, port health and border control, water resources, food safety and nutrition, waste management, hazardous and harmful substances and practices, immunisation and disease prevention and community health services);
- l) ensure that drugs and therapeutic products used in the Cook Islands are genuine, effective and beneficial, and to regulate their provision, distribution and use;
- m) provide the Government and the Minister with advice as to strategies, policies and planning concerning the development, resourcing, provision and management of health services;

- n) otherwise administer, implement and enforce all laws related to health matters and to the provision of health services, and any other subject or matter as may be determined by Cabinet from time to time.

Te Marae Ora recognises the importance of maintaining and enhancing strategic partnerships and relationships both internal and external. Decision-making is participatory and inclusive in all areas of the health system in both clinical and non-clinical areas and is based on the principle of evidence-based practice; based on research findings, statistical qualitative/quantitative data and other documented trends and behaviours.

It takes a multi-sector, sector wide approach to increase protective factors for healthy lifestyles such as good nutrition, physical activity, healthy environments and supportive relationships. This includes effective measures such as disease surveillance systems to protect the Cook Islands population from national and international public health threats and emergencies including CDs such as dengue fever, STIs, HIV/AIDS, and Avian influenza. Reducing NCD risk factors such as smoking, physical inactivity, poor diet and alcohol abuse remains a challenge and will require sustained action by individuals, families, communities and government.

Health Services delivered in the Cook Islands cover primary, secondary and tertiary care through a range of providers - private, public and visiting specialists/specialists teams. Referral to overseas providers is arranged under the "Patient referral programme".

1. PART III - Health Structure

Health services in the Cook Islands are provided through a system of child welfare clinics, dental clinics, health centres, and one general hospital on the main island of Rarotonga. Four private outpatient clinics, three private pharmaceutical outlets and one private dental clinic also operate in Rarotonga. While emergency departments in the hospitals are open 24/7, most community health services are open Monday to Friday, from 8am until 4pm.

There are three directorates within Te Marae Ora.

3.1 Directorate 1: Community Health Services

The Community Health Services Directorate is responsible for providing accessible and equitable health care services in the community setting. A key focus is on primary care services, preventing and protecting against diseases and injury, and promoting healthier living for improved population health outcomes. The objective is to achieve results through the provision of safe, quality, evidence based, accessible and affordable preventative health services for all population groups including children, adolescents, adults and older people in their community settings. These include schools, churches, workplaces and other settings.

The directorate's key service areas include: Mental Health, Health Protection, Health Promotion, Child, Adolescent, Reproductive and Maternal Health, Oral Health and Research.

3.2 Directorate 2: Hospital Health Services

The Hospital Health Services Directorate is responsible for providing accessible and equitable health care services in the hospital setting. A key focus is on primary, secondary, tertiary, rehabilitative and palliative care within our capabilities to improve population health outcomes.

The objective is to achieve results through the provision of safe, quality, evidence based, accessible and affordable treatment and interventional health care services with a focus on early diagnosis, management & treatment, recovery, and rehabilitation for all population groups. These include children, adolescents, adults and older people.

Clinical and Nursing services include: Surgical, Theatre Anaesthetics, Medical, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Out Patients/Accident and Emergency, Medical, and Paediatrics.

Clinical support services include: Ambulance/Orderlies/Security, Biomedical, Radiology, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Quality Management.

General support services include: Infection Control Cleaning, Kitchen/ Nutrition, Liaison, Patient Referral and Health Specialist Visit Coordination, Maintenance, Reception and Medical Records.

3.3 Directorate 3: Funding and Planning

The Funding and Planning Directorate is responsible for supporting the effective and efficient delivery of Community and Hospital health services throughout the Cook Islands with a key focus on providing funding and planning services. The objective is to achieve results through strong leadership, vision, strategic direction, evidence based policy, and the development of a performance based culture and excellence.

Funding & Planning services include Human Resources, Finance, Policy, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Information Communication and Technology.

3.4 Pa Enua Health Services

The core functions of the *Pa Enua* are mainly the basic primary health care services. Objective, outcome and key deliverables are outlined in the Community and Hospital Health Services.

In addition to the above functions, the officers in charge of the *Pa Enua* hospitals and health centres are required to perform administrative duties which are outlined in the Funding & Planning section.

3.5 Health Facilities

Table 2: Summary of health services by facility type, Cook Islands, 2012

Facility Type	Essential (core) services		Expanded Services
	Public health and preventive services	Clinical services	
Child welfare clinics (52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family planning, and promotion of breastfeeding and appropriate infant & family nutrition Monitoring of child growth and development Sanitation and hygiene Health promotion and education Immunization, deworming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child health Primary health care Maternal and child health and family planning Patient referral 	
Dental clinics (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Dental Services, Health promotion and education (limited) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dental care (minor surgery, extraction, broad range of restorative care and removable prosthesis (dentures)) 	Orthodontics, fixed prosthesis (crown & bridges and veneers (recent), endodontics, dental visit programs to the <i>Pa Enua</i> , maxillo-facial trauma management (limited)
Health centers (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and mental health Reproductive health including access to contraceptive methods, family planning and nutrition, and promotion of breastfeeding HIV/AIDS and STI prevention Patient counseling Environmental Health surveillance Health Promotion Programs for the reduction of tobacco, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, diabetes etc. Management and treatment of NCDs Violence and injury prevention programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>As for child welfare clinics</i> Family planning services Management of antenatal care, birthing and postnatal care Management, treatment and care of STIs including HIV/AIDS Medical and minor surgical emergencies Tupapa Community Clinic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Antenatal Family planning Mental health clinic Youth clinic Eye clinic Patient referrals 	
Pa Enua hospitals (1) (Aitutaki Hospital) 44 beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Refer Child Welfare and Dental clinics and health centers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>As for health centers</i> Outpatient care Consultations Minor operations Home visits Management of antenatal care, low risk birthing and postnatal care 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental care • Pharmacy (only in Aitutaki) • Laboratory (only in Aitutaki) • Radiology (only in Aitutaki) 	
General hospital (1) (Rarotonga Hospital) 100 beds	<i>As for child welfare clinics and health centers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer register • Hypertension and diabetes clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident and emergency • Medical services • Obstetrics and Gynecology • Pediatrics • General surgical services • Ultrasound/Radiology • Mental health services (limited) • Treatment for chronic diseases including follow-up care • Patient referrals • Physiotherapy and rehabilitation • Eye clinic • Laboratory services • Dental care • Pharmacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Specialists Visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental health ○ O & G ○ Pediatrics ○ Orthodontics ○ Neurology ○ Cardiology ○ Diabetes Management ○ Orthopaedics, ○ Ophthalmology ○ Ear, nose and throat ○ Gastroenterology (Urology, Endoscopy) ○ Mammography • Overseas referrals

3.6 Health Workforce

As of September 2012, Cook Islands have approximately 294 medical staff distributed throughout the population. Nurses, much like many other Pacific nations, are the largest workforce within the Cook Islands.

The development of the allied health workforce has been steady over the past five years, and continuous professional development have been key to address the gaps that impacts on the ability of the health sector to meet the needs of its population.

In 2010, the Te Marae Ora published a *Workforce Development Plan for 2010-2020*. The plan recognizes that in order to meet the health needs of the population a well-trained, highly skilled and competent health workforce is required. The mission statement is, *'to have a workforce with the capacity and capability to provide excellent health care services to achieve better health outcomes for the people of the Cook Islands'*.

Table 3: Workforce Data 2011/12

Registered Healthcare professionals	Rarotonga	Pa Enua	Total
Health Protection	10	12	22
Health Promotion	10		10
Public Health Nurses	10	3	13
Mental Health Nurses	2		2
Dentists	7		7
Dental Technician	1		1
School Dental Therapists	5		5
Primary Oral Health Care providers		6	6
Dental Assistants	4		4
Medical Officers	18	7	25
Nurse Practitioners	3	4	7
Midwives	17	2	19
Registered Nurses	36	12	48
Enrolled Nurses	2	10	12
Health Assistants	8	2	10
Pharmacists	3		3
Pharmaceutical Assistants	4	1	5
Laboratory technicians	8	1	9
Radiographers	3		3
Physiotherapists	1		1
Dieticians	1		1
Paramedics	9	3	12
Kitchen	6	2	8
Infection control cleaners	12	5	17
Reception	8		8
Maintenance/Security	7	5	12
Anaesthetic Technician	1		1
Administration	6	3	9
Medical Records	2		2
Finance	4		4
HR	1		1
ICT	2		2
Health Executives	4	1	5
	217	77	294